

AVERY ARCHITECTURAL AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY

GIFT OF SEYMOUR B. DURST OLD YORK LIBRARY

AN
ORATION,

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE LATE

Major-General Alexander Hamilton;

PRONOUNCED BEFORE

The New-York State Society of the Cincinnati,

ON TUESDAY, THE 31st JULY, 1804.

BY J. M. MASON, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE
CITY OF NEW-YORK.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis?—HOR.

Φίε ὦ ἀγαθὴ καὶ πιστὴ ψυχὴ, οἴχη δὴ ἀπολιπῶν ἡμᾶς.—XENOPH.

New-York :

PRINTED BY HOPKINS AND SEYMOUR,
AND SOLD BY G. F. HOPKINS, AT WASHINGTON'S HEAD,
NO. 118, PEARL-STREET.

.....
1804.

[COPY-RIGHT SECURED ACCORDING TO LAW.]

1000
E
1716
172
173
174

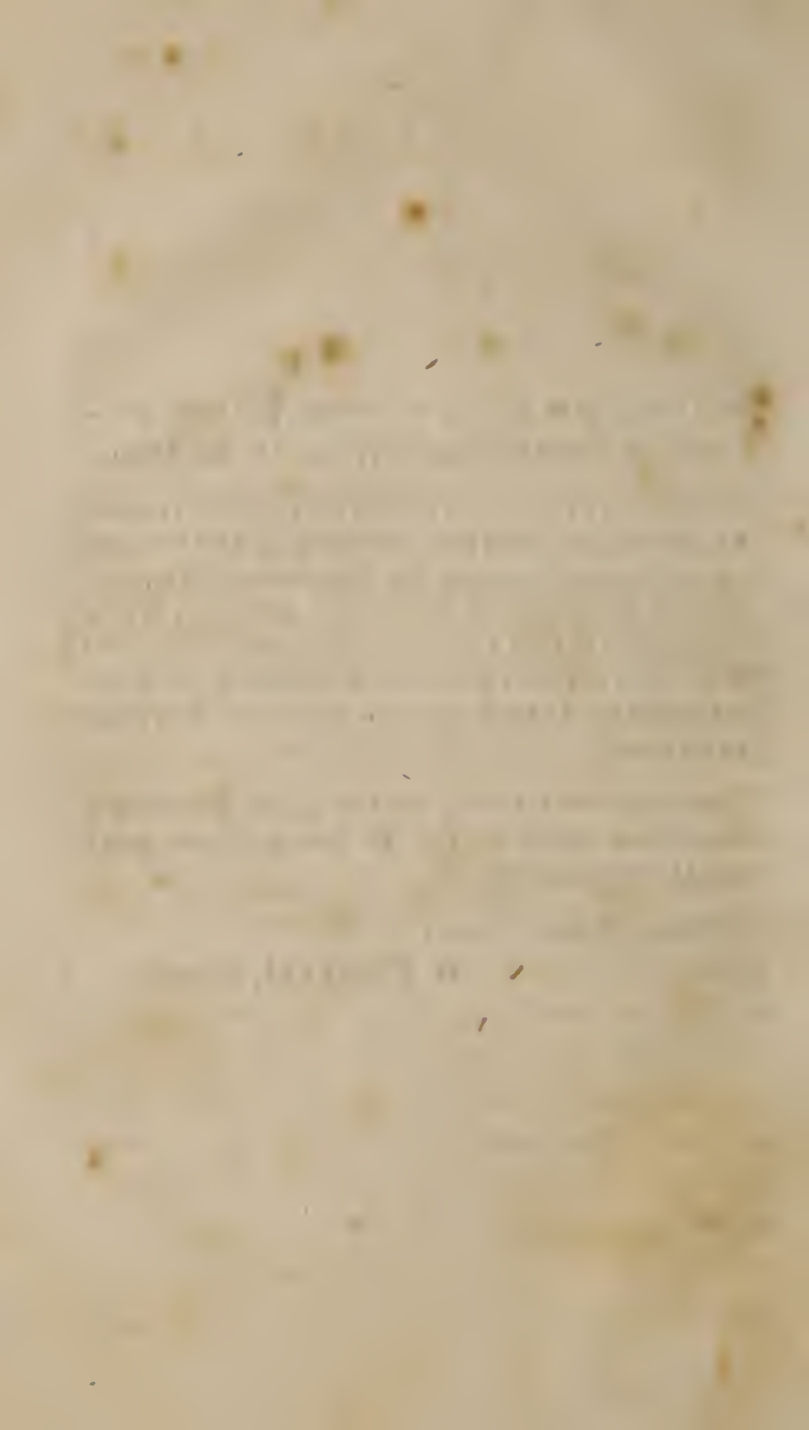
AT a Meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati, held at the Federal Hall in the City of New-York, on Tuesday, 31st July, 1804;

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the respectful Thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. Dr. JOHN M. MASON, for the very eloquent, impressive and instructive ORATION, delivered by him this day, at their request, on the ever to be lamented Death of their President, Major-General ALEXANDER HAMILTON ; and that a Committee be appointed to wait on him and request that he will be pleased to furnish them with a copy for the press.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the present Committee of Arrangement wait on the Rev. Dr. JOHN M. MASON, with a copy of these resolutions.

Extract from the Minutes,

W. POPHAM, *Secretary.*



FUNERAL ORATION.

SAD, my fellow-citizens, are the recollections and forebodings which the present solemnities force upon the mind. Five years have not elapsed since your tears flowed for the Father of your Country, and you are again assembled to shed them over her eldest Son. No, it is not an illusion—would to God it were : Your eyes behold it : the Urn which bore the ashes of WASHINGTON, is followed by the Urn which bears the ashes of HAMILTON. Cruel privation !—But I forbear. God’s “way is in the sea, “and his path in the great waters, and his foot-steps “are not known.” It is not for mortals to repine, much less to arraign. Our HAMILTON is removed ; and we have nothing left but to recal his image ; to gather up his maxims, and to profit by our affliction. Accompany me, therefore, to a short retrospect. I feel that I shall not justify an appointment too imposing to be declined. Your own hearts must supply my deficiency. I aspire to nothing more than a faint outline of the man whom you loved.

PRESAGES of his future eminence were evolved by the first buddings of intellect in ALEXANDER HAMILTON. The course of the boy, like that of the man, was ardent, rapid, and beyond the reach of his contemporaries. History will hereafter relate that he was numbered among Statesmen at an age when in others the rudiments of character are scarcely visible. In the contest with Great-Britain, which called forth every talent and every passion, his juvenile pen asserted the claims of the colonies, against writers from whom it would derogate to say that they were merely respectable. An unknown antagonist, whose thrust was neither to be repelled nor parried, excited inquiry ; and when he began to be discovered, the effect was apparently so disproportioned to the cause, that his papers were ascribed to a statesman who then held a happy sway in the councils of his country, who has since rendered her the most essential services ; and who still lives to adorn her name*. But the truth could not long be concealed. The powers of HAMILTON created their own evidence ; and America saw, with astonishment, a lad of seventeen in the rank of her advocates, at a time when her advocates were patriots and sages. A distinction thus nobly acquired, and ably maintained, was a pledge to the commonwealth, which he lost no time in redeeming. His first

* John Jay, Esq.

step, from the college, was into a military post ; his second into the family and confidence of WASHINGTON. Here he had opportunities of studying a man, from whom no other man was too great to learn ; of analyzing those rare qualities which met in his character ; and of nourishing his own magnanimity by free communication with the magnanimity of his chief. His sound understanding, his comprehensive views, his promptitude, application, and patience, would have endeared him to a man less discriminating than WASHINGTON ; but to him they were inestimable, and they speedily sunk the patron in the friend. The pair became inseparable. While others were indulging in wonted gaiety, they were closeted on matters of state ; and the pensive brow of the youth was often the first intimation of serious design in the veteran.

IT was impossible for such a pupil, in such a school, not to be conspicuous. The materials furnished by WASHINGTON's experience ; by his consummate prudence ; by the disclosure of his plans, and of the springs of national operations, fostered the genius of HAMILTON, and fitted him for command. His agency in the correspondence of the Commander in Chief, and in directing the movements of the army, is for the research of his biographer. I pass over his personal valour, not only because it never was disputed ; but because the possession of it, as

being one of the most common of military attributes, is not so much the praise of a soldier, as the want of it is his infamy. But be it remembered with pride, that he was as humane as he was brave. He knew how to storm an enemy's intrenchments, but not how to sacrifice a suppliant. His gentleness assuaged martial rigour; nor was his sword polluted by a drop of blood wantonly or carelessly shed.

THE capture of Lord Cornwallis having secured our independence, there was nothing to protract the war, but a few measures proper to save appearances, and to prepare for acceding, with decorum, to preliminaries of peace. It became, of course, a subject of solicitude to reflecting young men who had no profession but that of arms, how they should procure an honourable subsistence, and be useful to the community, when that profession should be superseded. Among these was HAMILTON. Encumbered with a family, destitute of funds, and having no inducement to continue in the army, he sheathed his sword, and, at the age of twenty-five, applied to the study of the Law.

To most men, sudden alterations of habit are seldom advantageous, often ruinous. HAMILTON they did but introduce to an acquaintance with his own inexhaustible mind. Hardly had he exchanged the camp for the bar, when he burst forth in the lus-

tre of a civilian ; and gave a promise which he more than fulfilled, of excelling in jurisprudence, as he had excelled in war.

BUT it was not for HAMILTON to detach his private pursuits from the public welfare. Scenes were about to open in which it would need his resource and his energy. The war of independence had terminated gloriously ; the states had risen to their natural position ; their career of prosperity had commenced, but their struggles were not over. Resentments, jealousies, and the farce of an *advising* government, kept them in jeopardy. That foresight, moderation, and firmness ; that comprehension of the public interest, and of the means of promoting it ; that zeal, and vigilance, and integrity, which were indispensable to our safety, the inspiration of God had assembled in the soul of HAMILTON. To many who now hear me it is familiar, that after the conclusion of peace, some of our citizens, impelled by their temper, their cupidity, or both, were meditating violence against the property and persons of all who had remained in this city during the war. The generous HAMILTON revolted. No consideration of private friendship or hazard could prevail with him to connive at faithlessness and revenge. He remonstrated against a scheme of which the policy was as false, as the spirit was malignant. His voice was authority, for it

was honour and truth. The public listened, and the infatuation was at an end*.

To these agitations succeeded a more perplexing difficulty. The confederation, framed under the pressure of common danger, proved unequal to its object whenever that pressure was removed. Thirteen republics, with an internal organization which commanded their whole moral and physical force; connected by a fictitious tie under a head without a single effective power, afforded a spectacle of which it is hard to say, whether it was more ludicrous or melancholy. Such a condition of things could not last. The very first occurrence which should put the will of congress at issue with the will of one of the larger states, would have dissolved the phantom; and shown America to be, what the discerning at home and abroad already perceived her to be, in theory, a nation; in fact, a number of rival and hostile sovereignties. The evils to be apprehended from such a conflict were alarming; and they were approaching with no less certainty, than it is certain that the principles of human action are not to be altered, nor suspended by compact. The failure of a request from Congress for permission to

* On this subject it would be less a compliment to mention, than an injury to omit, the name of his Excellency George Clinton, Esq. then Governor of the State; whose honourable, independent, and successful exertions to restrain our citizens, cannot be remembered but with respect and veneration.

levy a small duty upon imports, was hastening a crisis which the mighty mind of HAMILTON proposed to avert. With the express intention of making an effort to retrieve our affairs by establishing an efficient general government, did he consent to be nominated as a candidate for the legislature of this state. The design was magnanimous. It embraced the only expedient to prevent our ruin ; but it was confided to a few chosen friends. For such was the national inexperience, and the popular jealousy, that the least suspicion of his purpose would have blasted his reputation as an enemy to freedom. Oh, HAMILTON! equally pure and disinterested were all thy plans, though often misunderstood and calumniated ! And now, when there is no more room for suspicion, let his country in judging of them, not forget, that the very measure which, at first, she would bitterly have execrated, has been her salvation. Yes, it is indubitable, that the original germ out of which has grown up her unexampled prosperity, was in the bosom of HAMILTON. From the abortive attempt of Congress already mentioned, proceeded a commercial convention ; and to the report of that body, which, as he foresaw, was unable to extricate the nation, do we owe the Federal Convention. Here, Americans, was the constellation of your heroes and your statesmen. Here your WASHINGTON presided, and your HAMILTON shone. What weight the first of these names added to eye-

ry thing which received its sanction, and what a conciliating charm it diffused through the states, you need not to be informed. But you ought not to be ignorant, that the benefit arising from the signature of WASHINGTON substantiates a claim on your gratitude to HAMILTON; as it was the advice of the latter previously consulted, which persuaded the former to accept a seat in the convention. A prudent secrecy covers the transactions of that august assembly. But could the veil be drawn aside, you would hear the youth of thirty fascinating, with his eloquence, the collective wisdom of the states; and instructing the hoary patriot in the recondite science of government. You would observe all the emotions of his manly heart occupying, in turn, his expressive features; and see, through the window in his breast, every anxiety, every impulse, every thought, directed to your happiness.

THE result is in your hands: It is in your national existence. Not such, indeed, as HAMILTON wished, but such as he could obtain, and as the states would ratify, is the federal constitution. His ideas of a government which should elevate the character, preserve the unity, and perpetuate the liberties of America, went beyond the provisions of that instrument. Accustomed to view men as they are; and to judge of what they will be, from what they ever have been, he distrusted any political order

which admits the baneful charity of supposing them to be what they ought to be. He knew how averse they are from even wholesome restraint; how obsequious to flattery; how easily deceived by misrepresentation: how partial, how vehement, how capricious. He knew that vanity, the love of distinction, is inseparable from man; that if it be not turned into a channel useful to the government, it will force a channel for itself; and if cut off from other egress, will issue in the most corrupt of all aristocracies—the aristocracy of money. He knew, that an extensive territory, a progressive population, an expanding commerce, diversified climate, and soil, and manners, and interest, must generate faction; must interfere with foreign views, and present emergencies requiring, in the general organization, much tone and promptitude. A strong government, therefore; that is, a government stable and vigorous; adequate to all the forms of national exigency; and furnished with the principles of self-preservation, was undoubtedly his preference; and he preferred it because he conscientiously believed it to be necessary. A system which he would have entirely approved, would probably keep in their places those little men who aspire to be great; would withdraw much fuel from the passions of the multitude; would diminish the materials which the worthless employ for their own aggrandizement; would crown peace at home with

respectability abroad ; but would never infringe the liberty of an honest man. From his profound acquaintance with mankind, and his devotion to all that good society holds dear, sprang his apprehensions for the existing constitution. Convinced that the natural tendency of things is to an encroachment by the states on the union ; that their encroachments will be formidable as they augment their wealth and population ; and, consequently, that the vigour of the general government will be impaired in a very near proportion with the increase of its difficulties ; he anticipated the day when it should perish in the conflict of local interest and of local pride. The divine mercy grant that his prediction may not be verified !

BUT whatever fears he entertained for the ultimate safety of the Federal constitution ; it is, in every respect, so preferable to the old confederation, and its rejection would have been so extremely hazardous, that he exerted all his talents and influence in its support. In the papers signed PUBLIUS, which compress the experience of ages, and pour original light on the science of government, his genius has left a manual for the future statesman. And they will be read with deeper interest when it is considered that, eloquent and powerful as they are, they were written under the pressure of business, amidst the conversation of friends, and

the interrogatories of clients. Alas! the spirit which dictated them is fled; the hand which penned them moulders in death!

HIS voice co-operated with his pen: In the Convention of this state, which met to deliberate on the Federal constitution, he was always heard with awe, perhaps with conviction; though not always with success. But when the crisis arrived—when a vote was to determine whether New-York should retain or relinquish her place in the union; and preceding occurrences made it probable that she would choose the worst part of the alternative, HAMILTON arose in redoubled strength. He argued, he remonstrated, he entreated, he warned, he painted, till apathy itself was moved, and the most relentless of human things, a preconcerted majority, was staggered and broken. Truth was again victorious, and New-York enrolled herself under the Federal standard.

THE government happily erected, was now to be organized. Every eye fixed upon WASHINGTON for the first magistrate. He knew it, and hesitated. The competition between his love of retirement, his former resolutions, and the new state of affairs, held him in painful suspense. But the judgment of HAMILTON preponderated, and he yielded to the public wish.

THAT faithful adviser, whom he had consulted upon every question of moment, and who never gave him an unsound advice, could not be omitted in the original administration. The department best suited to him, because the most arduous, was the Treasury. He had already passed from the Warrior into the Jurist, and he was now to appear in the new and very different character of a Financier. A losing commerce, a famished agriculture, an empty purse, and prostrate credit, would have overwhelmed the ordinary man; but they only brought into action the resources of HAMILTON. His plans for redeeming the reputation of the country, by satisfying her creditors; and for combining with the government such a monied interest as might facilitate its operations, were strenuously opposed. But as it is easier to cavil than to refute, to complain than to amend, the opposition failed. The effect was electrical. Commerce revived; the ploughshare glittered; property recovered its value; credit was established; revenue created; the treasury filled.

THIS great fiscal revolution enriched numbers who held a large amount of the public paper, purchased at a season when the unpromising state of the public faith had set it afloat in the market at a most ignoble price. None could have fairer opportunities of acquiring a princely fortune, than the

financier himself. So inviting was the occasion, and the disposition to profit by it so little at variance with the common estimate of honourable gain, that few supposed it possible to resist the temptation. The fact being presumed, every petty politician erected himself into a critic; while the gazettes, the streets, the polls of election, resounded with the millions amassed by the Secretary. It is natural that the idolaters of gold should treat the contempt of it as a chimera: But gold was not the idol of HAMILTON. He had formerly relinquished his own claims to compensation for military services, that obloquy might not breathe an impeachment of his motives in espousing the claims of his brother officers*. And from this proud eminence which he then ascended, he was not now to be seduced by the attractions of lucre. Exquisitely delicate toward official character, he touched none of the advantages

* Being a member of Congress, while the question of the commutation of the half pay of the army for a sum in gross was in debate, delicacy, and a desire to be useful to the army, by removing the idea of his having an interest in the question, induced him to write to the Secretary of War, and relinquish his claim to half pay; which, or the equivalent, he accordingly never received. Neither did he ever apply for the lands allowed by the United States to officers of his rank. It is true, that having served through the latter periods of the war on the general staff of the United States, and not in the line of this state, he could not claim the allowance as a matter of course. But having before the war resided in this state, and having entered the military career at the head of a company of Artillery raised for the particular defence of this state, he had better pretensions to the allowance than others to whom it was actually made. Yet has it not been extended to him.

which he put within the reach of others ; he vested not a dollar in the public funds.

ALTHOUGH his particular province was the Treasury, his genius pervaded the whole administration ; and in those critical events which crowded each other, had a peculiar influence upon its measures. The French revolution, which our fondness mistook for the birth of virtuous freedom, stood before him, from the beginning, in that hideous form which it has since unmasked. Not to be duped by hollow pretences, he was active in arresting the course of an insolent minister : and not to be biassed by popular frenzy, he secured that dignified ground to which the United States were led by the proclamation of neutrality. Without his aid, great WASHINGTON himself might have been borne down by the torrent, and the nation implicated in war to gratify the resentment and ambition of France.

INTERNAL embarrassment soon added fresh honours to HAMILTON as a statesman. The western insurrection, which had rejected the condescending proposals of government, was to be quelled by force. A more serious question had not occupied the cabinet, as nothing had hitherto occurred to try the strength of the national arm. It was now to be ascertained how far the turbulent might trifle with the law ; and what reliance they might place upon

armed opposition. Incalculable consequences hung upon the precedent. Feeble measures would have surrendered the peace, perhaps the life of the union ; but feeble measures were contemplated. That timidity which shrinks from decision ; that economy which accounts every thing less precious than money ; and that covert treason which favoured the rebellion, would have ordered out a detachment that might have been met and defeated.

THE penetration of HAMILTON was not to be eluded, nor his firmness to be shaken, by any argument in support of so dangerous an experiment. "If you wish," said he, "to maintain the authority of the laws ; to prevent the repetition of similar outrages ; to spare your treasure and your blood ; let the insurgents, let the continent see, that it is never to admit of a doubt whether the national will shall be obeyed or not. Teach them this lesson by employing a force which shall put resistance out of the question." This sage and humane policy was adopted by WASHINGTON ; and the rebellion disappeared without effusion of blood.

AFTER the restoration of order, Mr. HAMILTON remained but a short time in office. His numerous services gave him, perhaps, a right to retire when

the state might be safely intrusted to other hands. But one reason of his retreat deserves particular notice, because it involves a mischievous and disreputable principle. A general error in popular systems is a frugality which computes nothing but pence. The affairs of a nation, however, cannot be ably conducted without able and independent men. But such men, in a country where the demand for active talent is greater than the supply, will always hold their fortunes in their own hand : nor are we to expect that they will submit to the toils and responsibility of public office with a support utterly disproportioned both to their station and their means of providing for themselves. No people is in jeopardy from the liberality of their civil list : But when this is niggardly, able men withdraw in succession, and the state falls, at length, into the hands of the weak or the wicked, whose want of capacity, or of integrity, squanders on one occasion, the public revenue, and on another, overloads it with the expenses of war. The last of these consequences God forbid we should experience ; the first was exemplified in the history of HAMILTON. He entered into public service with property of his own, the well-earned reward of professional talent ; he continued in it, till his little funds were dissipated ; and left it, to get bread for a suffering family. It was surely enough that he had impoverished himself while he was enrich-

ing the commonwealth ; but it was beyond measure insulting to charge him, under such circumstances, with invading the public purse. Nobody believed the charge ; and least of all, the slanderers who brought it. But WASHINGTON was vilified, and how should HAMILTON escape ! The virtuous saw, with regret, that he stooped to repel it ; and with anguish, that in regard to a private aberration, his defence contained a disclosure of which they admired the ingenuousness, but deplored the occasion, while they wept over a spot in a blaze of excellence.

LARGE and lucrative practice at the bar promised to replace his pecuniary sacrifices in official life. But a new distress of his country drew him again from his professional engagements. Our remonstrances against the injuries committed by France, had proved unavailing ; and her rude and humiliating requisitions had fired the national spirit. Little was to be expected from the generosity, and less from the rectitude, of a government framed upon the maxims of the new philosophy. Tribute or the sword, was the only choice of the States, and it would have been a libel on the war of independence to have hesitated a moment. A provisional army, with WASHINGTON at their head, was summoned into the field : but the condition on which he sus-

pended the acceptance of his own commission, was that HAMILTON should be his associate. The end of this stipulation could not be misunderstood. He not only designed to have his age relieved from some heavy cares by his younger friend ; but, in the event of his own decease, to leave the sword of America in the hands of a man, whom nothing could overreach, nothing intimidate, nothing corrupt.

SUBSEQUENT adjustment of our dispute with the French Republic, was accompanied with the discharge of the provisional army, and with HAMILTON's second return to his profession. Here, unwearied in diligence, and unrivalled in fame, he filled up the residue, (ah, too transient !) of his invaluable days. But, as you have truly been told, though he had withdrawn from public life, he was not an hour absent from the public service. It did not belong to a man absorbed in his country's welfare, to look with indifference on the course of her affairs. Office he wanted none. None in the gift of the nation would have moved him from his purpose. He reserved himself for crises which, he feared are approaching ; such crises, especially, as may affect the integrity of the union. How he was alarmed by every thing which pointed at its dissolution ; how indignant were his feelings and language on

that ungracious topic ; how stern and steady his hostility to every influence which only leaned toward the project, they will attest with whom he was in habits of communication. In every shape, it encountered his reprobation as unworthy of a statesman, as fatal to America, and desirable to the desperate alone. One of his primary objects was to consolidate the efforts of good men in retarding a calamity which, after all, they may be unable to avert ; but which no partial nor temporary policy should induce them to accelerate. To these sentiments must be traced his hatred of continental factions ; his anxiety for the federal constitution, although, in his judgment, too slight for the pressure which it has to sustain ; his horror of every attempt to sap its foundation or loosen its fabric ; his zeal to consecrate it in the affections of his fellow-citizens, that if it fall at last, they may be pure from the guilt of its overthrow—an overthrow, which may be accomplished in an hour, but of which the woes may be entailed upon ages to come.

WITH such dignified policy he joined the most intense application to his professional duties. But the description of these is not my province. How he resolved the most intricate cases ; how he pursued general principles through their various modifications ; how he opened the fountains of justice ;

how he revered the rights of property ; how he signaled himself in protecting the defenceless ; how judges, and jurors, and counsel, and audience, hung on his accents ; let them declare who have intrusted their fortunes to his hand : Let them declare who have wondered that any man should be thought great while HAMILTON appeared at the American bar.

BUT enumerations were endless. He was born to be great. Whoever was second, HAMILTON must be first. To his stupendous and versatile mind no investigation was difficult—no subject presented which he did not illuminate. Superiority, in some particular, belongs to thousands. Pre-eminence, in whatever he chose to undertake, was the prerogative of HAMILTON. No fixed criterion could be applied to his talents. Often has their display been supposed to have reached the limit of human effort ; and the judgment stood firm till set aside by himself. When a cause of new magnitude required new exertion, he rose, he towered, he soared ; surpassing himself, as he surpassed others. Then was nature tributary to his eloquence ! Then was felt his despotism over the heart ! Touching, at his pleasure, every string of pity or terror, of indignation or grief ; he melted, he soothed, he roused, he agitated ; alternately gentle as the dews, and aw-

ful as the thunder. Yet, great as he was in the eyes of the world, he was greater in the eyes of those with whom he was most conversant. The greatness of most men, like objects seen through a mist, diminishes with the distance : but HAMILTON, like a tower seen afar off under a clear sky, rose in grandeur and sublimity with every step of approach. Familiarity with him was the parent of veneration. Over these matchless talents Probity threw her brightest lustre. Frankness, suavity, tenderness, benevolence, breathed through their exercise. And to his family !—but he is gone.—That noble heart beats no more : that eye of fire is dimmed ; and sealed are those oracular lips. Americans, the serene beam of your glory is extinguished in the tomb !

FATHERS, friends, countrymen ! the death of HAMILTON is no common affliction. The loss of distinguished men is, at all times, a calamity ; but the loss of such a man, at such a time, and in the very meridian of his usefulness, is singularly portentous. When WASHINGTON was taken, HAMILTON was left—but HAMILTON is taken, and we have no WASHINGTON. We have not such another man to die ! WASHINGTON and HAMILTON in five years !—Bereaved America ! Thou art languishing beneath the divine displeasure. Let this truth aw-

fully impress my hearers, that when the Almighty God is about to “shake terribly the earth;” when he has bidden scourge to follow scourge, and vengeance to press on vengeance, one of his means is to deprive a nation of their ablest men. Thus bereft of counsel, their affairs run into confusion, and bring forth misery. I invent nothing; I only repeat the admonition of holy writ: “For behold
 “the Lord, the Lord of hosts doth take away the
 “mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and
 “the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient,
 “the captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and
 “the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the
 “eloquent orator.” The disastrous consequences are, impotent governors, and ruthless anarchy. For the prophet continues, “I will give children to be
 “their princes, and babes shall rule over them.
 “And the people shall be oppressed, every one by
 “another, and every one by his neighbour; the
 “child shall behave himself proudly against the an-
 “cient, and the base against the honourable.”

FATHERS, friends, countrymen! the grave of HAMILTON speaks. It charges me to remind you that he fell a victim, not to disease nor accident; not to the fortune of glorious warfare; but, how shall I utter it? to a custom which has no origin but superstition, no aliment but depravity, no reason but

in madness. Alas ! that he should thus expose his precious life. This was his error. A thousand bursting hearts reiterate, this *was* his error. Shall I apologize ? I am forbidden by his living protestations, by his dying regrets, by his wasted blood. Shall a solitary act into which he was betrayed and dragged, have the authority of a precedent ? The plea is precluded by the long decisions of his understanding, by the principles of his conscience, and by the reluctance of his heart. Ah ! when will our morals be purified, and an imaginary honour cease to cover the most pestilent of human passions ? My appeal is to military men. Your honour is sacred. Listen. Is it honourable to enjoy the esteem of the wise and good ? The wise and good turn with disgust from the man who lawlessly aims at his neighbour's life. Is it honourable to serve your country ? That man cruelly injures her, who, from private pique, calls his fellow-citizen into the dubious field. Is fidelity honourable ? That man forswears his faith, who turns against the bowels of his countrymen, weapons put into his hand for their defence. Are generosity, humanity, sympathy, honourable ? That man is superlatively base, who mingles the tears of the widow and orphan, with the blood of a husband and father. Do refinement, and courtesy, and benignity, entwine with the laurels of the brave ? The blot is yet to be wiped

from the soldier's name, that he cannot treat his brother with the decorum of a gentleman, unless the pistol or the dagger be every moment at his heart. Let the votaries of honour now look at their deeds. Let them compare their doctrine with this horrible comment. Ah! what avails it to a distracted nation that HAMILTON was murdered for a punctilio of honour? My flesh shivers! Is this, indeed, our state of society? Are transcendent worth and talent to be a capital indictment before the tribunal of ambition? Is the Angel of Death to record, for sanguinary retribution, every word which the collision of political opinion may extort from a political man? Are integrity and candour to be at the mercy of the assassin? And systematic crime to trample under foot, or smite into the grave, all that is yet venerable in our humbled land? My countrymen, the land is defiled with blood unrighteously shed. Its cry, disregarded on earth, has gone up to the throne of God; and this day does our punishment reveal our sin. It is time for us to awake. The voice of moral virtue, the voice of domestic alarm, the voice of the fatherless and widow, the voice of a nation's wrong, the voice of HAMILTON's blood, the voice of impending judgment, calls for a remedy. At this hour Heaven's high reproof is sounding from Maine to Georgia, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Missis-

sippi. If we refuse obedience, every drop of blood spilled in single combat, will lie at our door, and will be recompensed when our cup is full. We have, then, our choice, either to coerce iniquity, or prepare for desolation ; and in the mean time, to make our nation, though infant in years, yet mature in vice, the scorn and the abhorrence of civilized man !

FATHERS, friends, countrymen ! the dying breath of HAMILTON recommended to you the Christian's hope. His single testimony outweighs all the cavils of the sciolist, and all the jeers of the profane. Who will venture to pronounce a fable, that doctrine of " life and immortality," which his profound and irradiating mind embraced as the truth of God ? When you are to die, you will find no source of peace but in the faith of Jesus. Cultivate for your present repose and your future consolation, what our departed friend declared to be the support of his expiring moments :—" A tender reliance on " the mercies of the Almighty, through the merits " of the Lord Jesus Christ."

HAMILTON ! we will cherish thy memory, we will embalm thy fame ! Fare thee well, thou unparalleled man, farewell—forever !

The first part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The letter is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The eighth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The ninth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

The tenth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State to the President, dated the 10th of January, 1800. It contains a report on the state of the Union, and a list of the names of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The report is signed by the Secretary, and is addressed to the President.

APPENDIX.



NO. I.

GENERAL HAMILTON'S WILL.

IN the name of God, Amen. I, ALEXANDER HAMILTON, of the city of New-York, Counsellor at Law, do make this my last Will and Testament, as follows :

FIRST. I appoint JOHN B. CHURCH, NICHOLAS FISH, and NATHANIEL PENDLETON, of the city aforesaid, Esquires, to be Executors and Trustees of this my Will ; and I devise to them, their heirs and assigns, as joint tenants and not as tenants in common, all my estate real and personal whatsoever, and wheresoever, upon trust at their discretion, to sell and dispose of the same, at such time and times, in such manner, and upon such terms, as they the survivors and survivor shall think fit ; and out of the proceeds to pay all the debts which I shall owe at the time of my decease ; in whole, if the fund be sufficient ; proportionably, if it shall be insufficient ; and the residue, if any there shall be, to pay and deliver to my excellent and dear wife, Elizabeth Hamilton.

THOUGH, if it should please God to spare my life, I may look for a considerable surplus out of my present property : yet if he should speedily call me to the eternal world, a forced sale, as is usual, may possibly render it insufficient to satisfy my debts. I pray God that something may remain for the maintenance and education of my dear wife and children. But should it on the contrary happen, that there is not enough for the payment of my debts, I entreat my dear children, if they, or any of them, should ever be able, to make up the deficiency. I, without hesitation, commit to their delicacy a wish dictated by my own.—Though conscious that I have too far sacrificed the interests of my family to public avocations, and on this account have the less claim to burthen my children, yet I trust in their magnanimity to appre-

ciate as they ought, this my request. In so unfavourable an event of things, the support of their dear mother, with the most respectful and tender attention, is a duty, all the sacredness of which they will feel. Probably her own patrimonial resources will preserve her from indigence. But in all situations they are charged to bear in mind, that she has been to them the most devoted and best of mothers.

IN testimony whereof I have hereunto subscribed my hand, the ninth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and four.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

SIGNED, Sealed, Published and Declared, as and for his last Will and Testament, in our presence, who have subscribed the same in his presence, the words *John B. Church* being above interlined.

DOMINICK F. BLAKE,
GRAHAM BURRIL,
THEO. B. VALLEAU.

New-York, Surrogate's Office, ss.—July 16th, 1804.

I do hereby certify the preceding to be a true copy of the original Will of Alexander Hamilton, deceased, now on file at my office.

SYLVANUS MILLER, Surrogate.

NO. II.

The following Paper, in the hand writing of General HAMILTON, was inclosed with his Will and some other papers in a packet addressed to one of the Executors, which was of course not to have been delivered but in case of the melancholy event that has happened.

ON my expected interview with Col. Burr, I think it proper to make some remarks explanatory of my conduct, motives, and views.

I WAS certainly desirous of avoiding this interview, for the most cogent reasons.

1. MY religious and moral principles are strongly opposed to the practice of duelling, and it would ever give me pain to be obliged to shed the blood of a fellow creature in a private combat, forbidden by the laws.

2. MY wife and children are extremely dear to me, and my life is of the utmost importance to them, in various views.

3. I FEEL a sense of obligation towards my creditors, who, in case of accident to me, by the forced sale of my property, may be in some degree sufferers. I did not think myself at liberty, as a man of probity, lightly to expose them to this hazard.

4. I AM conscious of no *ill will* to Col. Burr, distinct from political opposition, which, as I trust, has proceeded from pure and upright motives.

LASTLY. I shall hazard much, and can possibly gain nothing, by the issue of the interview.

BUT it was, as I conceive, impossible for me to avoid it. There were *intrinsic* difficulties in the thing, and *artificial* embarrassments, from the manner of proceeding on the part of Col. Burr.

INTRINSIC, because it is not to be denied, that my animadversions on the political principles, character, and views of Col. Burr, have been extremely severe; and on different occasions I, in common with many others, have made very unfavourable criticisms on particular instances of the private conduct of this gentleman.

IN proportion as these impressions were entertained with sincerity, and uttered with motives and for purposes which might appear to me commendable, would be the difficulty (until they could be removed by evidence of their being erroneous) of explanation or apology. The disavowal required of me by Col. Burr, in a general and indefinite form, was out of my power, if it had really been proper for me to submit to be so questioned; but I

was sincerely of opinion that this could not be ; and in this opinion I was confirmed by that of a very moderate and judicious friend whom I consulted. Besides that, Col. Burr appeared to me to assume, in the first instance, a tone unnecessarily peremptory and menacing ; and in the second, positively offensive. Yet I wished, as far as might be practicable, to leave a door open to accommodation.—This, I think, will be inferred from the written communications made by me and by my directions, and would be confirmed by the conversations between Mr. Van Ness and myself, which arose out of the subject.

I AM not sure whether, under all the circumstances, I did not go further in the attempt to accommodate, than a punctilious delicacy will justify. If so, I hope the motives I have stated will excuse me.

IT is not my design, by what I have said, to affix any odium on the conduct of Col. Burr in this case—He doubtless has heard of animadversions of mine which bore very hard upon him ; and it is probable that, as usual, they were accompanied with some falshoods. He may have supposed himself under the necessity of acting as he has done—I hope the grounds of his proceeding have been such as ought to satisfy his own conscience.

I TRUST, at the same time, that the world will do me the justice to believe, that I have not censured him on light grounds, nor from unworthy inducements. I certainly have had strong reasons for what I may have said ; though it is possible that, in some particulars, I may have been influenced by misconstruction or misinformation. It is also my ardent wish that I may have been more mistaken than I think I have been ; and that he, by his future conduct, may show himself worthy of all confidence and esteem, and prove an ornament and blessing to the country.

- As well because it is possible that I may have injured Col. Burr, however convinced myself that my opinions and declarations have been well founded, as from my general principles and temper in relation to similar affairs ; I have resolved, if our interview is conducted in the usual manner, and it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to *reserve* and *throw away* my first fire, and I *have thoughts* even of *reserving* my second fire—and thus giving a double opportunity to Col. Burr to pause and reflect.

IT is not, however, my intention to enter into any explanations on the ground. Apology, from principle, I hope, rather than pride, is out of the question.

To those who, with me, abhorring the practice of duelling, may think that I ought on no account to have added to the number of bad examples, I answer, that my *relative* situation, as well in public as private, enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honour, imposed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call. The ability to be in future useful, whether in resisting mischief or effecting good, in those crises of our public affairs, which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular.

A. H.



NO. III.

To the Editor of the Evening Post.

Thursday Evening, July 12.

MR. COLEMAN,

THE public mind being extremely agitated by the melancholy fate of that great man, ALEXANDER HAMILTON, I have thought it would be grateful to my fellow-citizens, would provide against misrepresentation, and, perhaps, be conducive to the advancement of the cause of religion, were I to give a narrative of some facts which have fallen under my own observation, during the time which elapsed between the fatal duel and his departure out of this world.

YESTERDAY morning, immediately after he was brought from Hoboken to the house of Mr. Bayard, at Greenwich, a message was sent informing me of the sad event, accompanied by a request from General Hamilton, that I would come to him for the purpose of administering the Holy Communion. I went; but being desirous to afford time for serious reflection, and conceiving that under existing circumstances, it would be right and pro-

per to avoid every appearance of precipitancy in performing one of the most solemn offices of our religion, I did not then comply with his desire. At one o'clock I was again called on to visit him. Upon my entering the room and approaching his bed, with the utmost calmness and composure he said, "My dear Sir, you perceive my unfortunate situation, and no doubt have been made acquainted with the circumstances which led to it. It is my desire to receive the Communion at your hands. I hope you will not conceive there is any impropriety in my request." He added, "It has for some time past been the wish of my heart, and it was my intention to take an early opportunity of uniting myself to the church, by the reception of that holy ordinance." I observed to him, that he must be very sensible of the delicate and trying situation in which I was then placed; that however desirous I might be to afford consolation to a fellow mortal in distress; still, it was my duty, as a minister of the gospel, to hold up the law of God as paramount to all other law; and that, therefore, under the influence of such sentiments, I must unequivocally condemn the practice which had brought him to his present unhappy condition. He acknowledged the propriety of these sentiments, and declared that he viewed the late transaction with sorrow and contrition. I then asked him, "Should it please God, to restore you to health, Sir, will you never be again engaged in a similar transaction? and will you employ all your influence in society to discountenance this barbarous custom?" His answer was, "That, Sir, is my deliberate intention."

I PROCEEDED to converse with him on the subject of his receiving the Communion; and told him that with respect to the qualifications of those who wished to become partakers of that holy ordinance, my inquiries could not be made in language more expressive than that which was used by our Church.—"Do you sincerely repent of your sins past? Have you a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of the death of Christ? And are you disposed to live in love and charity with all men?" He lifted up his hands and said, "With the utmost sincerity of heart I can answer those questions in the affirmative—I have no ill will against Col. Burr. I met him with a fixed resolution to do him no harm—I forgive all that happened." I then observed to him, that the terrors of the divine law were to be announced to the obdurate and impenitent:

but that the consolations of the Gospel were to be offered to the humble and contrite heart: that I had no reason to doubt his sincerity, and would proceed immediately to gratify his wishes. The Communion was then administered, which he received with great devotion, and his heart afterwards appeared to be perfectly at rest. I saw him again this morning, when, with his last faltering words, he expressed a strong confidence in the mercy of God through the intercession of the Redeemer. I remained with him until 2 o'clock this afternoon, when death closed the awful scene—he expired without a struggle, and almost without a groan.

By reflecting on this melancholy event, let the humble believer be encouraged ever to hold fast that precious faith which is the only source of true consolation in the last extremity of nature. Let the infidel be persuaded to abandon his opposition to that gospel which the strong, inquisitive, and comprehensive mind of a HAMILTON embraced, in his last moments, as the truth from heaven. Let those who are disposed to justify the practice of duelling, be induced, by this simple narrative, to view with abhorrence that custom which has occasioned an irreparable loss to a worthy and most afflicted family: which has deprived his friends of a beloved companion, his profession of one of its brightest ornaments, and his country of a great statesman and a real patriot.

With great respect,

I remain your friend and servant,

BENJAMIN MOORE.



NO. IV.

To the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser.

SIR,

HAVING read, in your paper of the 16th, a very imperfect account of my conversation with General Hamilton, the day previous to his decease, I judge it my duty to lay the following narrative before the public.

ON the morning of Wednesday, the 11th inst. shortly after the rumour of the General's injury had created an alarm in the city, a note from Dr. Post informed me that "he was extremely ill at Mr. Wm. Bayard's, and expressed a particular desire to see me as soon as possible." I went immediately. The exchange of melancholy salutation, on entering the General's apartment, was succeeded by a silence which he broke by saying, that he "had been anxious to see me, and have the sacrament administered to him; and that this was still his wish." I replied, that "it gave me unutterable pain to receive from him any request to which I could not accede: that, in the present instance, a compliance was incompatible with all my obligations; as it is a principle in our churches never to administer the Lord's Supper privately to any person under any circumstances." He urged me no further. I then remarked to him, that, "the Holy Communion is an exhibition and pledge of the mercies which the Son of God has purchased; that the absence of the sign does not exclude from the mercies signified; which were accessible to him by faith in their gracious author." "I am aware," said he, "of that. It is only as a sign that I wanted it." A short pause ensued. I resumed the discourse, by observing that "I had nothing to address to him in his affliction, but that same *gospel of the grace of God*, which it is my office to preach to the most obscure and illiterate: that in the sight of God all men are on a level, as *all have sinned, and come short of his glory*; and that they must apply to him for pardon and life, as *sinners*, whose only refuge is in his *grace reigning by righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ*." "I perceive it to be so," said he; "I am a sinner: I look to his mercy." I then adverted to "the infinite merit of the Redeemer, as the *propitiation for sin*, the sole ground of our acceptance with God; the sole channel of his favour to us; and cited the following passages of scripture:—*There is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus. He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.*" This last passage introduced the affair of the duel, on which I reminded the General, that he was not to be instructed as to its moral aspect, that *the precious blood of Christ* was as effectual and as necessary to wash away the transgression which had involved him in suffering, as any other transgression; and that he must there, and there alone,

seek peace for his conscience, and a hope that should "*not make him ashamed.*" He assented, with strong emotion, to these representations, and declared his abhorrence of the whole transaction. "It was always," added he, "against my principles. I used every expedient to avoid the interview; but I have found, for some time past, that my life *must* be exposed to that man. I went to the field determined not to take *his* life." He repeated his disavowal of all intention to hurt Mr. Burr; the anguish of his mind in recollecting what had passed; and his humble hope of forgiveness from his God. I recurred to the topic of the divine compassions; the freedom of pardon in the Redeemer Jesus to perishing sinners. "That grace, my dear General, which brings salvation, is rich, rich"—"Yes," interrupted he, "it is *rich* grace." "And on that grace," continued I, "a sinner has the highest encouragement to repose his confidence, because it is tendered to him upon the surest foundation; the scripture testifying that *we have redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.*" Here the General, letting go my hand, which he had held from the moment I sat down at his bed-side, clasped his hands together, and, looking up towards heaven, said, with emphasis, "I *have* a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ." He replaced his hand in mine, and appearing somewhat spent, closed his eyes. A little after, he fastened them on me, and I proceeded. "The *simple* truths of the Gospel, my dear Sir, which require no abstruse investigation, but faith in the veracity of God who cannot lie, are best suited to your present condition, and they are full of consolation." "I feel them to be so," replied he. I then repeated these texts of scripture:—*It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and of sinners the chief. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* "This," said he, "is my support. Pray for me." "Shall I pray with you?" "Yes." I prayed with him, and heard him whisper as I went along; which I supposed to be his concurrence with the petitions. At the conclusion he said, "Amen. God grant it."

BEING about to part with him, I told him "I had one request to make." He asked "what it was?" I answered, "that what-

ever might be the issue of his affliction, he would give his testimony against the practice of duelling." "I will," said he, "I have done it. If *that*," evidently anticipating the event, "if *that* be the issue, you will find it in writing. If it please God that I recover, I shall do it in a manner which will effectually put me out of its reach in future." I mentioned, once more, the importance of renouncing every other dependence for the eternal world, but the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; with a particular reference to the catastrophe of the morning. The General was affected, and said, "Let us not pursue the subject any further, it agitates me." He laid his hands upon his breast, with symptoms of uneasiness, which indicated an increased difficulty of speaking. I then took my leave. He pressed my hand affectionately, and desired to see me again at a proper interval. As I was retiring, he lifted up his hands in the attitude of prayer, and said feebly, "God be merciful to——." His voice sunk, so that I heard not the rest distinctly, but understood him to quote the words of the publican in the gospel, and to end the sentence with, "me a sinner."

I saw him, a second time, on the morning of Thursday; but from his appearance, and what I had heard, supposing that he could not speak without severe effort, I had no conversation with him. I prayed for a moment at his bed side, in company with his overwhelmed family and friends; and for the rest, was one of the mourning spectators of his composure and dignity in suffering. His mind remained in its former state: and he viewed with calmness his approaching dissolution. I left him between twelve and one, and at two, as the public know, he breathed his last.

I am, Sir,

With much respect,

Your obedient servant,

J. M. MASON.

New-York, July 18th, 1804.

EVERY
CLASSICS



